<ATL>Perceptions of Procedural Justice Mediate the Relationship Between Local Violent Crime Density and Crime Reporting Intentions</ATL>

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<ABS>Community attitudes toward the police are of increasing concern to scholars and practitioners. Although it is widely accepted that perceptions of procedural justice are influential in shaping citizens' attitudes toward police, prior studies have not considered its relationship to crime density. To address this gap, we examined the relationship between crime density, perceptions of procedural justice, and intentions to report crimes to police using data from a demographically representative survey in an urban center widely known for exhibiting extremely high violent crime rates. We created a path model predicting perceptions of procedural justice, the likelihood of contacting police to report a crime, and the likelihood of socially interacting with police other than in relation to crime. The results indicate that independent of race and educational background, community members' trust in police mediates the relationship between local crime density and their intentions report crimes to and otherwise interact with the police.</ABS>

<P>The relationships and degree of cooperation between urban community members and police are important social issues. Recent events have brought increased attention due to these issues, as well as widespread concerns about policing practices in disadvantaged urban communities. It is a challenge for law enforcement officers to provide public safety in hostile environments often comprising individuals who are not inclined to report crimes to the police (Carr, Napolitano, & Keating, 2007). Although law enforcement agencies depend on the cooperation of the community to effectively manage crime in such areas (Cao, 2011; Gau & Brunson, 2010), unfavorable attitudes toward the police and the unwillingness of residents to contact the police hinder ongoing safety and security efforts (Bradford, Jackson, & Stanko, 2009).</P>

<P>The degree to which individuals trust the police is an important predictor of their willingness to not only report crimes to the police but also assist and cooperate with the police (Brunson, & Miller, 2006; Sampson, & Bartusch, 1998). Police cannot address unreported crimes, and victims of criminal violence may be unlikely to report such incidents (Thomson & Langley, 2004). Perceptions that police exhibit procedural justice in interactions with the public predict both beliefs that the police are legitimate and greater intentions to assist police in control crime (Murphy, Hinds, & Fleming, 2008). Favorable attitudes associated with citizens' belief that police were treating them fairly, impartially, and with concern for citizens' rights led to increased compliance with the police and adherence to the law (Gau, 2010). When citizen trust and cooperation is diminished, police resort more so to the use of physical force and compulsion (Williams, 2008).</P>

<P>The importance of procedural justice was suggested in a randomized experiment that demonstrated that trust and confidence in police was higher when police officers used a script based on procedural justice principles during encounters compared to standard

3

procedures (Murphy, Mazerolle, & Bennett, 2014). Yet high levels of violent crime are often associated with negative process-related experiences with police that can have a debilitating impact on public trust, thus suggesting that perceptions of procedural justice are shaped by community levels of violent crime (Sharp & Johnson, 2009).</P>

<P>Although previous studies provide evidence that neighborhood crime levels shape attitudes toward the police (e.g., Sharp & Johnson, 2009), questions remain about how differential crime levels influence the behavior of residents regarding their willingness to make calls for service and their attitudes toward social interaction with police officers. To address this gap, this study uses crime incident data and resident survey responses from Flint, Michigan.</P>

<P>Our hypotheses, independent of demographic factors, are as follows:

<UL>H1: Local crime densities affect perceptions of procedural justice; people who live in areas with high crime are less likely to trust police.

H2: Perceptions of procedural justice predict the likelihood of contacting police to report a crime.

H3: Perceptions of procedural justice predict the likelihood of socially interacting with police (other than crime related).

H4: Perceptions of procedural justice mediate the relationship between local crime density and intentions to cooperate with police (as indicated by the outcome measures).</UL>

<P>We also examine whether local crime densities affect intentions to cooperate with police independent of perceptions of procedural justice. To test these hypotheses, we developed a path model examining the relationships between violent crime density, perceptions of procedural justice, and reporting intentions and interaction intentions,

4

along with other contextually relevant factors such as education, race, gender, and age (Tyler & Fagan, 2008).</P></P>

METHOD

<P>The study used data from Flint residents from the 2011 wave of a demographically representative countywide survey in Genesee County, MI. Genesee County's urban center of Flint is an industrial city whose economy and population has followed the manufacturing capacity of the city's largest employer, the General Motors Corporation (GM). Flint's population declined 48% from 196,940 in 1970 to 102,434 in 2010 (U.S. Census, 2011). In recent decades, Flint has consistently ranked as one of the most dangerous cities in the United States (Morgan, Morgan, & Boba Santos, 2013).</P>

<P>The survey sample was developed based on randomly selected addresses from U.S. Post Office lists, with a quota of 20 respondents in each residential Census Tract in the City of Flint. The survey could be completed in three ways: mailed hardcopy (sent back in a self-addressed stamped envelope [SASE]), Qualtrics survey on the Internet, and computer-aided telephone interview (CATI). The most frequent method of survey completion was returning hardcopy surveys in a SASE (n = 861, 72.5%), followed by the online survey (n = 257, 21.7%), CATI (n = 55, 4.6%), and 14 hardcopy surveys (1.2%) distributed and collected by community-based organization (CBO) partners. The overall response rate was 25%.</P>

Independent variables. <P>The Flint police department provided data on crime incidents between 2005 and 2011; these data were categorized according to National Incident-Based Reporting System categories and geocoded. We developed indices of violent crimes (assault, homicide, robbery, and forcible sex offenses) and property crimes (arson; burglary and breaking and entering; destruction, damage, or vandalism of property; larceny

theft; and motor vehicle theft). We computed the crime densities per square mile for each geocoded survey respondent with a one-mile buffer. Survey respondent data were geocoded when exact addresses were available. Demographic items used in this analyses include the respondent's age, sex, race (African American/Black or European American/White, less than 2% of the sample indicated another race), and years of education completed.</P>

<H3>*Outcome variables.*</H3> <P>The outcome variables included a procedural

justice scale and single indicator items on contacting the police to report crimes and otherwise talking with police officers. Survey respondents answered questions about the characteristics of police in their neighborhoods on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly agree*) to 5 (*strongly disagree*). The procedural justice scale included the following items: "The police in my neighborhood...(1) Treat people with respect; (2) Take time to listen to people; (3) Explain their decisions to people they deal with; and (4) Can be trusted." The item on reporting to the police asked, "How likely would you be to contact the police to report a crime if one occurred?" The other outcome measure asked, "How likely would you be to talk with a police officer for any other reason?" We created a path model predicting trust in police, the likelihood of contacting police to report a crime, and the likelihood of socially interacting with police other than in relation to crime for participants with complete data.</P>

<H1>**RESULTS**</H1>

<P>Table 1{TBL 1} provides variable descriptives. The densities of violent crimes and property crimes were strongly related, $r(463) = .926$, $p < .001$, so the density of violent crimes was used as the predictor variable. The 7-year trend in violent crimes (crimes per square mile) inversely predicted perceptions of procedural justice, older participant age

directly predicted perceptions of procedural justice, and no other factors were unique predictors (see Figure 1{FIG1}). Procedural justice, in turn, influenced both likelihood of contacting the police and interactions with the police. Higher levels of education also predicted greater intention to report to the police and older age predicted greater intention to interact with the police (outside of crime reporting). Model fitting tests indicate that the model is a good fit to the data.</P>

<H1>DISCUSSION</H1>

<P>Results confirm all four hypotheses regarding crime density, perceptions of procedural justice, and intentions to cooperate with the police. Perceptions of procedural justice mediated the relationship between crime density and intentions to contact police to report a crime and interact with police for any other reason. Consistent with prior research, older respondents appeared to trust the police more than their younger counterparts (Tyler & Fagan, 2008). The findings extend prior research by demonstrating the importance of community context, specifically crime density, on citizen perceptions of procedural justice and intentions to cooperate with the police. These findings highlight the importance of perceptions of procedural justice when it comes to police–community relations (Gau & Brunson, 2010; Tyler, 2003). Indeed, this corroborates the principles of community policing, where the effectiveness of police depends upon public approval and voluntary cooperation of the public. </P>

<P>Additionally, the findings suggest the maxim that the neighborhoods most in need of positive police–community relations, i.e., neighborhoods most negatively affected by violent crime, are those where the challenges are greatest. At the same time, they are the

7

neighborhoods where the potential benefits of procedurally fair and effective policing is greatest.</P>

Conclusion

<zaq;2>

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137-147.</REF>

{TBL1}<TC>*Table 1. Variable Descriptives (n = 378)*</TC>

Variables	%	M	SD
<TB>Age (y)		55	±15
Race			
White	50%		
Black	50%		
Sex			
Female	71%		
Male	29%		
Education			
Less than high school	10%		
High school	28%		
Technical school	5%		
Some college	29%		
Associate's	10%		
Bachelor's	8%		
Master's or higher	9%		
Crime density		0.56	±0.19
Procedural justice		3.12[a]	±0.90
Reporting intentions		4.43[a]	±0.99
Interaction intentions		3.81[a]	±1.23

<TF>*Note*. y = years; M = mean; SD = standard deviation.

[a]Scores on a 1 to 5 scale.</TF>

{FIG1}<LEG>*Figure 1.* Standardized regression coefficients in parsimonious path model.</LEG>
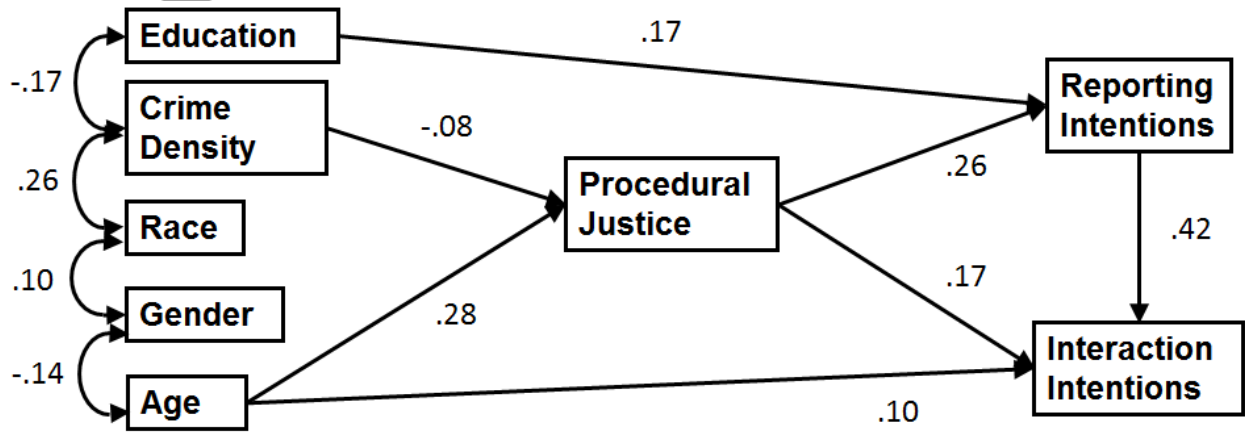
$\chi^2_{(17)} = 15.63, p = .550$, GFI = .990, NFI = .941, CFI = 1.00, RMSEA = .000

Note. Race: 0 = White, 1 = Black; Gender: 0 = female, 1 = male.

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13